

**Statement by Carolyn Miles,
President and CEO, Save the Children
at the Special Event to follow up efforts made
towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals**

New York, 25 September 2013

Introduction

1. Good afternoon distinguished chairpersons, President of the General Assembly, co-panelists, member states and fellow participants.
2. I am Carolyn Miles, President and CEO of Save the Children in the United States and I'm delighted to be here to discuss how the Millennium Development Goals have the power to change the lives of children and families all over the world – including the life of Suraj, a toddler I met in the slums of New Delhi earlier this year.

Helping Suraj Thrive

3. Suraj's mother, Kismati, told me the heart-wrenching story of how she had lost her newborn daughter after a difficult birth at home over two years ago. The baby wasn't breathing when she was born and the traditional birth attendant didn't know what to do. Like so many other children in India and around the world, Kismati's baby girl didn't survive the crucial first moments of life.
4. However, Kismati's face turned from sorrow to joy when her 15-month-old son, Suraj, came toddling over to us. Because when Kismati discovered she was pregnant again, she worked with a local community health volunteer who helped her access prenatal care and she decided to give birth in a nearby hospital. Kismati had never gone to school and she rarely left her immediate neighborhood. But thanks to a local health worker and access to basic health services, this young mother welcomed a healthy son into the world and gave him the best start in life she could.

Progress towards achieving the MDGs

5. Since 2000, the MDGs have had an enormous impact on the lives of children. The number of children dying before their fifth birthday has dropped from 12 million in 1990 to 6.6 million in 2012. And women like Kismati have experienced that difference.
6. Yet despite remarkable achievements, progress has been uneven. Too many of the poorest and hardest-to-reach children are being left behind, whether in urban slums or rural villages.
7. To help children like Suraj not only survive but thrive as he grows, we must ensure that he has nutritious food to help his mind and body develop. We must ensure that he not only goes to school, but also that he learns the skills he needs so he can build his own future.
8. To do this, governments must lead the way. Donors, the private sector and NGOs can innovate, partner, support and ensure accountability – but governments must lead. There is a lot that needs

to be done, but I want to highlight three ways that governments must lead to accelerate progress to achieve the MDGs and meet the promises we made to children and families over a decade ago.

- i. **Invest in frontline health workers.** Governments must ensure that every mother and child has access to quality affordable health care, including by deploying trained health workers who can tackle the leading causes of child, newborn and maternal death, including pneumonia and diarrhea.
- ii. **Invest in nutrition.** Malnutrition is an underlying cause in nearly half of all under-five child deaths. Governments must fight hunger and promote nutrition by integrating a minimum package of nutrition interventions into their national policies for young children, and pregnant and breastfeeding mothers, to ensure that young bodies and minds grow stronger.
- iii. **Invest in learning.** Governments must ensure that the world's most marginalized children, including girls and children living in conflict, are in school and that all children are learning.

The Post-2015 Development Agenda

9. We must not only consider what needs to be done to accelerate progress on the MDGs, but also what our vision is for the world in 2030.
10. In 2000, the world called for a two-thirds reduction in under-five child mortality by 2015. This is transformative, but it is not enough. What about the other one-third of children? Do we just move on to the next set of issues? No. We need to ensure that the post-2015 development agenda finishes the job that the current MDGs so boldly began.
11. We can be the generation that ends extreme poverty.
12. We must set a vision for getting to zero. But to do this, we must confront the challenge of growing inequality. In many parts of the world, even where progress has been made, it has not been shared equally. A child's chances in life must not be determined by where they are born—in a slum in New Delhi or on the Upper East Side of New York. The right of survival, of health, of education, must be a reality for every mother and child.
13. Inequality will persist unless we tackle it head-on in the next development agenda.
14. Today, Save the Children released a new report called "Getting to Zero" looking at our prospects to end multiple dimensions of poverty within a generation – not just income, but preventable child deaths, the completion of primary education and access to water and sanitation. And we have found that it is indeed possible.
15. Suraj's mother gave him the best start in life she could, but our accountability to him – and the millions of children like him – is not over yet. We have much more to do and many more children who are counting on us to be the generation that ends extreme poverty for every child everywhere.